

10 February 1958

MEMORANDUM FOR: Assistant to DBI (Planning)

SUBJECT: Comments on Your Draft Memorandum, Subject: Intelligence Communications and Related Procedures, 13 January 1958

1. The premise that the intelligence community should have all the necessary benefits of adequate telecommunications services under all circumstances is endorsed fully, in principle. Your paragraph 4 sets the terms of reference of your paper to deal only with the transmission media. I do not agree with that limitation.

2. The question arises, however, as to whether the delays in the conversion of the raw material from information to intelligence are the responsibility of the means of transmission or of the processing at either end of the circuit. Is the broad highway of communications faulty or are the approaches and exits to this highway congested? These questions lead to further questions:

- a. What types of information go into the make-up of what types of intelligence?
- b. With what speed should these types of information reach the intelligence community to be of maximum value?
- c. Is the same speed of handling required for all types of information?

3. Air Defense requires a high-capacity, instantaneously available telecommunications system as an integral part of its operations. NSA, also, requires and has such a system for its own specialized purposes. NSA's rapid reception in Washington is not always followed by rapid dissemination, unfortunately. On the contrary, NSA routine dissemination is notably slow, except in the case of special observations from field stations.

4. The problems of communications within the intelligence community "from the time that a piece of information is collected until the intelligence judgment based upon it is implanted in the minds of the persons whose policy decisions and actions are influenced by it" is more than a matter of "transportation" of information. It is a teamwork process of gathering, translating, evaluating, publishing, distributing, further evaluating, associating, discarding, retaining, coordinating, interpreting, further

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evaluating, and publishing first the parts, and then the whole, as the mosaic of an intelligence picture is pulled together. Gaps are discovered, further requirements are sent to the field, and the whole process begins over again. Of course, all these phases of the intelligence effort go on simultaneously. From the DD/I standpoint, it is rare that a single bit of information constitutes finished intelligence.

5. The participants in these processes are people with a variety of talents, skills, and backgrounds, doing a variety of jobs and each contributing his unique bit towards the final objective. These include intelligence agents, interviewers, interpreters, area experts, technical experts, political analysts, writers, editors, and so on. A centralized scanning of incoming materials, even by experts, can be only a first-line screening-its quality in direct relation to the qualifications, alertness, and current background of the scanners.

6. Much of the information pouring into Washington is not intended primarily for intelligence purposes. It is intended for information, action, and/or policy decisions in State, Commerce or Agriculture, as examples. In these cases, after study and evaluation copies are distributed to other interested agencies, including intelligence.

7. Finer breakdowns of materials in the initial stages would relieve intelligence production components of a great burden of unnecessary handling, reading or scanning, and leave them free to do their assigned jobs. Certainly this would increase materially the dissemination job but it would also reduce materially the time spent in the handling of unrelated material and the reproduction of the "bits and pieces" by the professional staff.

8. In summary, the factors of human judgment and evaluation which enter, intermittently, in the various steps of the intelligence process cannot be by-passed or discounted. The problem appears to rest in the mechanics of the system whereby information becomes subject to human evaluation and judgment. These mechanical steps should be so organized as to permit the maximum amount of information to be taken into account in the processes of evaluation and judgment. One of the mechanical aspects of the "transportation" of information is a telecommunications system. The establishment of an independent world-wide communications system for the intelligence community may be requisite, especially in the future, to assure timely intelligence production under all circumstances. The establishment of such a system should be considered, however, in relation to the over-all problem, which includes problems such as those heretofore enumerated, that is, in conjunction with the organization for dissemination and exploitation of information in Washington within reasonable time limits.

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Central Reference

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